

# UPDATE<sup>ST.</sup>LUCIE

A monthly update from the St. Lucie County Board of County Commissioners

November 2016

## State Funds Pave the Way for New Hiking Trails

St. Lucie County's Environment Resources Department (ERD) is set to receive more than \$1.25 million in state funding to connect five different segments of the East Coast Greenway Trail (ECG). The ECG is a 3,000-mile, traffic-free greenway system, linking many of the major cities of the eastern seaboard between Canada and Key West. The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) announced recently that all of St. Lucie County's submitted projects were included in the state's selection of first-year projects to receive funding under the Shared Use Nonmotorized (SUN) Trail program. ERD manages much of the local trail systems within the county's 10,000-acre preserve system and staff has fostered trail links and acquisition programs since the birth of the county's greenway trail vision in the early 1990s. St. Lucie County will be partnering with the City of Fort Pierce, City of Port St. Lucie, and the Savannas Preserve State Park to utilize these grant dollars.

## Best Places to Work

The St. Lucie County Board of County Commissioners was recently named as one of the "Best Places to Work" by the St. Lucie County Human Resources Association. A dozen companies and local governments were recognized during the Human Resource Association's 15<sup>th</sup> Annual St. Lucie County "Best Place to Work" Awards last week. County Administrator Howard N. Tipton accepted the award for St. Lucie County Board of County Commissioners, which was one of four entities named in the Large Employer Category. A total of 37 different measurements were used to evaluate the nominations such as turnover rates, growth percentages, employee development spending, promotion percentages, insurance packages and retirement plans.

## Volunteers Needed for Committees & Boards

St. Lucie County Commissioners are looking for civic-minded residents to serve on several boards and committees. Some boards/committees may require specific qualifications or past experience, but the minimum requirements are: Must be a St. Lucie County resident; Must not be related to another committee member, County Commissioner or county employee involved with the committee of interest; Must not be employed by the same business entity as other committee members; Must not serve on more than two county committees (does not apply to Ad Hoc Committees). Financial disclosure is required for some of these boards and committees. Applications and more information about each of the advisory boards is available on the county's website at: [www.stlucieco.org/boards](http://www.stlucieco.org/boards).

## Calling All Authors

The St. Lucie County Library System is seeking authors to participate in the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Book Fair scheduled for Saturday, March 11, 2017. This year's event will be focused on writers of adult fiction and nonfiction who live on the Treasure Coast. To ensure a quality experience for all involved, space at each location is limited to 20 authors. Priority will be given to first time exhibitors. Entry forms are available at all libraries and at <http://library.stlucieco.gov>.

## Calendar Events:

- ◆ St. Lucie County offices, libraries and attractions such as the Oxbow Eco-Center and St. Lucie County Aquarium will be closed Friday, Nov. 11 in observance of Veterans Day.
- ◆ St. Lucie County offices, libraries and attractions will be closed Thursday, Nov. 24 and Friday, Nov. 25 in observance of Thanksgiving.

## QUICK STATS

### Building Permits:

- ◆ Building permit activity was up 14.6% for September 2016 vs. September 2015. Revenue was up significantly by 32% - due to an infusion of contractor license renewals and the issuance of 30 single-family home permits. Year-to-date activity and revenue continue to outpace the previous year.

### Home Sales:

- ◆ The average median home sale price in the county was \$184,000 in September (up 10% from \$167,250 in 2015) with 96% selling at the listed price. Condo sales in jumped to \$165,000 (up 6.5% from last year's \$155,000) with 93% selling at the listed price, according to the St. Lucie Realtors Association.

### Bed Tax Collection:

- ◆ Bed tax collections for August 2016 increased by 4.5% compared to the year prior. With one month left in the budget year, the county's tourism revenue has already surpassed last year's efforts.

### Unemployment Rate:

- ◆ St. Lucie's unemployment rate for September dropped slightly to 5.9% down from August's 6%, and down from 6.2% a year ago. Florida's unemployment was at 4.7%. There were more than 4,400 reported jobs on the Treasure Coast compared to last year with the largest job gains in Edu/Health (1,600), Government (900) and Professional Services (900).